



U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Office of the Director
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FACT SHEET

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December 2002 (Revised)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER (OCAHO)

The Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer has jurisdiction over three types of cases arising under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), including those involving allegations of: (1) knowingly hiring, recruiting, or referring for a fee or the continued employment of unauthorized aliens, and failure to comply with employment verification requirements in violation of section 274A of the INA (employer sanctions); (2) immigration-related unfair employment practices in violation of section 274B of the INA; and (3) immigration-related document fraud in violation of 274C of the INA. OCAHO is headed by a Chief Administrative Hearing Officer who provides overall program direction, articulates policies and procedures, establishes priorities, and administers the hearing process presided over by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs).

The ALJs hold hearings and related administrative proceedings and render decisions on cases assigned to them concerning the three areas listed above. The ALJs may impose sanctions and penalties as prescribed by law, issue cease and desist orders, award attorney's fees, and, in the case of immigration-related unfair employment practices, award back pay. The Chief Administrative Hearing Officer also certifies, as having received the requisite training in employment discrimination matters, ALJs who hear cases regarding the imposition of penalties against employers who discriminate against any individual--other than an unauthorized alien--in employment-related situations because of that individual's national origin or citizenship status.

The provisions of section 274A of the INA apply to all employers in the United States with regard to all employees hired, recruited, or referred after November 6, 1986, the date of enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA).

◆ **Biographical Information**

Jack E. Perkins **Chief Administrative Hearing Officer**

Jack E. Perkins was appointed Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in January 1990. He served as Acting Deputy Director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review from March to August 2001 while continuing to service as Chief Administrative Hearing Officer. Mr. Perkins received his Bachelor of Arts degree at San Jose State University (with honors) in 1966, and his law degree from the University of

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California, Hastings College of the Law, in 1972. Much of Mr. Perkins' professional career has been spent serving in various positions within the Department of Justice including Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, 1986 to 1990; legislative counsel and staff attorney, Office of Legislative Affairs, 1976 to 1985; staff attorney, Criminal Division, 1974 to 1976 and 1972 to 1973; and assistant U.S. attorney, Northern District of California, 1973 to 1974. Prior to joining the Department, Mr. Perkins served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966 to 1969 as an infantry officer and instructor of military tactics and history. He is a member of both the California and District of Columbia Bars.

Louis J. Ruffino
Deputy Chief Administrative Hearing Officer

Louis Ruffino became Special Counsel to the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in August 1999, and then Deputy Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in February 2000. Prior to his tenure in OCAHO, he served as an associate general counsel in the Office of the General Counsel from February 1997 to July 1999. He received his B.A. in 1986 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and his J.D. in 1993 from the University of San Diego School of Law. Prior to joining the Office of the General Counsel, Mr. Ruffino served as a contract attorney with the firm of Cacheris & Treanor in Washington, DC from 1996 to 1997. From 1995 to 1996, he was of counsel to the firm of Brincefield, Hartnett & Associates in Alexandria. In 1993, Mr. Ruffino served as a judicial law clerk for former Chief Judge Fred B. Ugast and Senior Judges Samuel B. Block, John R. Hess, and Joseph M.F. Ryan at the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Mr. Ruffino is a member of the Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia Bars.

Robert L. Barton, Jr., Administrative Law Judge

Judge Barton has been an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) since September 1988, and joined OCAHO in July 1995. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1965, and his J.D. degree from Boston College Law School in 1969. Prior to joining OCAHO, he worked as an ALJ with the U.S. Department of Transportation, from 1990 to 1995, and with the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Social Security Administration, from 1988 to 1990. From 1975 to 1988, Judge Barton worked as a senior attorney with the Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection. He has also spent several years working in Washington in private practice. Judge Barton has taught at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy and the Department of Justice's Legal Education Institute. He is a member of both the Massachusetts and District of Columbia Bars.

Ellen K. Thomas, Administrative Law Judge

Judge Thomas was appointed as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) in August 1990, and came to OCAHO in October 1995. She completed her undergraduate work at Oberlin College in 1955, and received her Juris Doctorate degree from Indiana University School of Law in 1973. Before joining OCAHO, Judge Thomas served as an ALJ with the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Social Security Administration, in Evansville, Indiana. She also held various positions in the Indianapolis District Office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Judge Thomas taught at the Indiana School of Law and worked in private practice for several years in Bloomington, Indiana. She is a member of the Indiana Bar.

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